

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Maria Hernandez , I am from New Haven.

I am in favor of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD FOR AN INCOME ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF MIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and health care to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am a mother and an immigrant and even though I have the privilege of having status here, I want to support children who are not born here and have no immigration status. I am very interested in this issue because previously I did not have health insurance. When you go to the hospital, they send you a bill and it is very difficult to follow up on your health. In my case, I have a serious heart condition. When I felt sick, many times I didn't go to the hospital because they would charge me. When the chest discomfort started, I avoided the doctor, and when it got worse, I went to the hospital and came out with a fifteen hundred dollar bill that I could not pay. I felt desperate, I started to think about how I was going to pay for it. You worry when you have no money. Thank God, I have my health insurance now. I have two children and they were born here, and you can see the difference thanks to the insurance when you take your children to the hospital, for example, they don't charge us or they charge us very little.

Not having insurance makes it much more difficult to get care without having to pay a huge bill. An acquaintance of mine, for example, got sick and was going to the hospital but the bills were too high when he was admitted to the hospital, he realized it was too expensive and decided to go back to his home country. Unfortunately, for many people that is not an option.

By writing this letter I hope to be able to support people, and especially, the children most in need to get the care they need so that they and their parents can have the peace of mind that they will be well attended.

I support S.B. 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Going forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Maria Hernandez